

FITNESS

How to Reduce Your Chances of Developing Hypertension?

It's not certain that you can prevent it, but it's reasonable to think that the same practices that help control it might also prevent or postpone it.

Here's what to do:

1. Maintain a healthy weight

Losing even a few pounds if you're overweight can reduce blood pressure. Weight loss (achieved through diet and exercise) can sometimes bring hypertension under control without the need for drugs, or with lower doses of drugs.

2. Don't smoke

A person with high blood pressure who smokes is at serious risk. Every cigarette raises blood pressure. Quitting lowers it.

3. Exercise regularly

Exercise is useful in both preventing and treating hypertension. For one thing, it can help you lose weight. Regular aerobic exercise reduces your risk of heart attack. If you are sedentary and just beginning an exercise program to combat hypertension, remember that you may not see the effects for months. But just 30 minutes of brisk walking four or five times a week can eventually make a difference. If you already have high blood pressure and plan to exercise intensely, you should first discuss your program with your doctor.

4. Eat a healthy diet

Eat a diet rich in fruits, whole grains, vegetables and low-fat dairy products.

5. Keep your sodium intake low

Remember to keep your daily sodium intake below 2,400 milligram. A high sodium diet has no advantages and many disadvantages. For instance, the typical salty diet is likely to contain lots of processed foods, be low in vitamins and minerals, and be high in fat. Reducing sodium intake is often an important step in treating high blood pressure.

